

SUICIDES, LISTEN!

If You Are Tired of Life, Try This Place.

TUBEROSES AND DEVIL FISHES.

As Reestablishment, Fitted Up Especially for Those Who Are Weary of this Life.—Etc.

In a recent issue of The New York Sunday Mercury there appears under the title, "Enthousiasms Villa," a very remarkable article by Charles Maurice, which purports to describe, with the most minute and harrowing details, a curious philanthropic establishment which was founded by one Mr. Richard Uterex. The object of this institution is to afford for persons who are weary of the slings and arrows of an outrageous fortune a thoroughly well fitted and well managed place where they can commit suicide in any way that best pleases their fancy. Every possible convenience is given them to depart this life either by a slow, dreamy, pleasant process, or by a route as swift as the lightning's dashing course through the skies. The following description of the place is given:

One day a young man, haggard, pale and tottering, entered the superbly furnished office and was obsequiously received by the polite clerk. One of the clerks asked the young man what manner of death he had chosen. Another of the clerks asked:

"Do you wish to see the prospectus?"

"I beg your pardon," said the young man, but he quickly continued: "The prospectus! Oh, yes, certainly, the prospectus."

Then, with the discreet manner of a waiter in a fashionable restaurant who seeks to learn the guest's preference—Pomari and Sauterne—the clerk handed the young man a richly bound album, wherein were described the different modes of death furnished by the house. The enumeration of these various methods plunged the reader into a shuddering astonishment. At first he ran over them with his finger rather than with his eye, stopping here and there, amused by the marginal illustrations; then he began again, reading seriously this time, without, however, coming to a decision. Certainly hanging had its charms, but what poetry there was about asphyxia with flowers! The soul departs with the breath of the tuberose! And the poisons, rooms Nos. 4 to 10—a vast choice! And the Indian Curare—the prick of a pin in the bed or elsewhere, and then Nirvana. But here are the lost diseases! Ah, the lost diseases! To contract by artificial means leprosy, or the black death, to offer to the practitioners of the present day, whom the disappearance of these "affections" renders inconsolable, the occasion of studying them "from the life," to carry away in dying the consolation that you leave in your remains a whole field of delicate experiences! That is without doubt incomparably more noble than death by laughter, the simple idea of which gives you a name and dishonors the ingenious enumeration of Mr. Richard Uterex. But there are ill-natured persons who would be offended at this prospect, however glorious it may be, of having these written on their bodies; they prefer a sort of aristocracy of silence. What could be better than the lazing of veins in a warm bath?

GOING OVER THE GROUND.
The life weary young man, according to the story, was too bewildered to decide how he had better slip the mortal coil, when one of the clerks suggested:

"Perhaps it would be well to visit the establishment?"

"That will suit me exactly."

"Whenever it will please you to do so."

After a few inquiries about terms, which were answered by Richard Uterex himself, who said that all settlements were made on the guests' leaving the building, the young man made the tour of Enthousiasms Villa.

In the large vestibule of a spacious staircase the visitor was shown, with a reverential bow, which he involuntarily imitated, a large statue of the great Schopenhauer, the patron of the institution. Then they proceeded up stairs.

A door opened; it was the chamber called "The Pistol Shot." Like all the other rooms in the house, this was light and elegantly furnished in modern style. As in all others, too, its principal ornament was a handsome coffin in carved ebony; the cover was placed crosswise on the box, as though awaiting its occupant. There were several divans and reclining chairs about the room; the bed was in rosewood.

"Everything is considered here with the most perfect discretion," said the guide; "a system of electrical currents, moved by the report, divides in two, lengthwise, whatever piece of furniture the guest has chosen to commit suicide on; a long basket receives the body before it has had time to stain the furniture or the floor with a single spot. Kindly observe that the walls are upholstered with a thickness of four mattresses, so that it is impossible for any one on the other side of the partition to hear the faintest sound, however powerful the firearm used, even though it were a small Krupp cannon, such as you see there in the corner. Guests have all the time they wish; we never hurry them. Each room is provided with a library abundantly furnished with the most melancholy works. Schopenhauer has been translated for us into all the languages of the Old and New Worlds. Those ten shelves are full of novels that end badly. Upon the davenport, the cushions of various religions round the praises of death. Some serious philosphers and a few poets, Lucrèce and Leopardi, occupy the twelfth shelf. As for the conveniences of life (before departing), they leave nothing to be desired. A telephone in each chamber communicates with the office. Orders for meals, or whatever else is wanted, are executed with the utmost promptness by faceless automatons; we keep a whole company of them here. This delicate attention of Mr. Uterex's part is generally very highly appreciated, for people who are so disgusted with life that they are ready to commit suicide wish to see the human face no more. Finally—will you kindly examine the rack—there you will find either terrible, elegant or brutal instruments of sudden death."

One by one the stranger saw all the philanthropic ideas imagined by Mr. Richard Uterex. In the Asphyxia chamber, after having explained the perfect obstructions that prevent air from entering when once the door is closed, the clerk proposed to the visitor a brief experience, so that he might judge for himself of its efficiency. This offer, which is rarely accepted, was declined, as charcoal and laughing gas have but little attraction except as a last resort. Tuberoses tempt more, must of the suicide's neophytes being afflicted with sentimentalism. Large masses of fresh flowers were everywhere about the chamber, harmonizing with the designs of the carpet and the hangings.

The function was resumed.

The stranger stopped with some curiosity on the third floor, at a landing where there were three doors, each one bearing a sign, "For Science."

"Mr. Uterex here offers an opportunity of rendering by one's death a great service to human kind," says the guide, according to the story. "Here, in the experimental chamber, magnanimous individuals, who care nothing about their lives, experiment on substances, to prove to science whether they are harmless or toxic; others submit themselves to cruel surgical operations and successive mutilations that give the exact measurement of human sensibility. Some days ago a young Russian had a quarter of his cranium sawed off; he survived exactly three hours and fifty minutes. The house doctor, Mr. O'Neil, was wild with joy. 'What a splendid experiment!' he cried."

"The Chamber of Lost Diseases is also very popular," continued the clerk, pointing to the door; "if you apply your nostrils to the well, you will notice that it is isolated by a perpetual interior bath of phenol. We have the finest collection of virus that there is in the world. At the present moment a leprosy patient is in extremis behind this wall."

"Electricity plays the principal role in death by laughter," continued the guide, leading the young man to another room. This is a concealed method—a bed that looks comfortable and invites you to sleep, but as soon as a living person is stretched upon it he is irritated by irresistible grapples, while the illusive couch is instantly decomposed into a multitude of minute brushes, very soft and yet very stiff, which run over the patient's body, imitating the prickings of millions of insects, stopping by preference on the joints, and never ceasing to play strange and skipping marches upon the soles of the feet. But a curious spectacle, and one that will certainly interest you," pursued the guide, in a soft, insidious and almost confidential tone, "awaits you. Kindly follow me."

His guide took him by the arm and led him on. A door opened. At first he did not distinguish anything; then, in the greenish air, he saw the rigid forms of naked walls in a large, unfurnished and silent room. The room was silent. But a murmur came from the deaf walls, a murmur that can only be compared to the distant report of a storm, or the hoarse resounding, increased a hundredfold, of one of those shells wherein vibrates the obscure roaring of the ocean. The clerk went to the wall, and with the gesture of a magician making passes, touched it rapidly here and there. Immediately the right side of the wall disappeared and the report redoubled. It was like the confused echo of lives seeking in the waves. And there they were swarming in the flooded walls—fishes, crustacea, mollusks and all submarine animals. It was the sea, and upon this dark green bottom, coming from afar, increasing and enlarging, entering in the chamber, appeared tens, hundreds and thousands of arms terminated by round and bloodless mouths.

The visitor stepped back—mentally—for he was incapable of making a physical movement; all sentiment of life that remained in him was in his head, in the roots of his hair, an unusual pricking, as though his hair stood literally on end.

"The devil fish!" said his guide in a hollow voice; "a living body full of muscles and blood, trembling and sensitive, thrown into this artificial sea, which, although without water, is more terribly real than the other, can here find the most splendid banquet of physical sufferings. Just imagine the sensation of mortal disgust at the sticky and swarming lines of those innumerable tentacles, each one gifted with the force of a thousand leeches! The very essence of the body is in the blood, and with the blood life escapes through this monstrous suction. Little by little the patient grows weaker, the eyelids close and rigor sets in. No one will ever know whether you perished by fear or by pain."

The young man grew white, and seemed to be in a paroxysm of dread. The guide assisted him to the balcony, and supported him while he breathed the fresh air.

LIFE IS SWEET.

"What manner of death have you chosen?"

The stranger was feverishly agitated. "I cannot—I should prefer—"

"To visit the establishment again, perhaps?"

"No, no?"

"However, you may choose some—"

"Yes, of course, I must; it is evident—"

He gradually regained his self possession and at the same time his love of life; he assumed, not without effort, an easy air and an appearance of indifference to the physical terrors at which, in reality, he still inwardly trembled. Suddenly, as though illumined with an idea, he said:

"Let us go down stairs."

When they reached the third floor he pointed to the experimental chamber and said:

"You say it is occupied?"

"Yes, it is occupied."

"What a pity! Well, and the stranger affected to contemplate longingly the forbidden threshold; 'well, I will wait. Let us descend.'"

At the office he was received by Mr. Uterex himself, who welcomed him with a gentle smile.

"The room that I have selected"—began the young man with an easy manner.

"The experimental chamber?"

"Yes."

"It is occupied," said Mr. Uterex, still smiling, and at the same time offering the visitor a thin sheet of Bristol board with gilt edges, on which was written:

Mr. X. to Richard Uterex, Dr.

To restoring love of life.....\$5,000

As the Peeler Saw It.

Policeman—Yes, sir, Mr. Stormsby will be a famous man some day. He already has a western reputation.

"Really? I never heard of him before."

"You haven't? Why, I've run him in three times myself."—Nebraska Journal.

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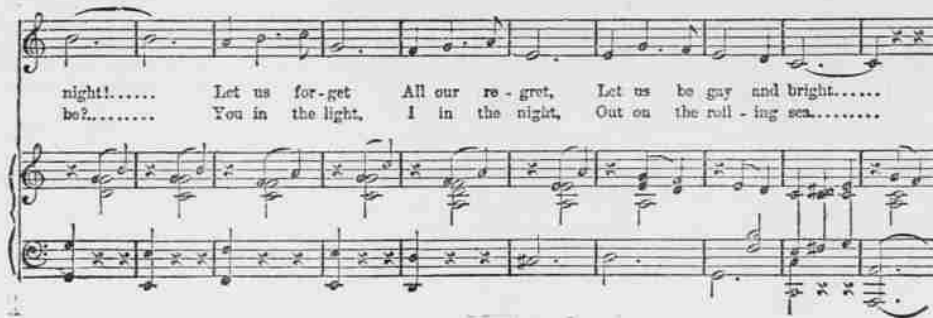
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